

Message Text

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TAGS: SHUM MO
SUBJECT: PRISONERS' HUNGER STRIKE

REF RABAT 1436

1. PRESS HAS CARRIED STORIES IN RECENT WEEKS OF HUNGER STRIKES BY POLITICAL PRISONERS IN MEKNES. PRISONERS REPORTED DEMANDING IMPROVEMENT IN CONDITIONS, VISITING RIGHTS, INCREASED PRIVILEGES. MEANWHILE, WELL-ORGANIZED PARENTS OF 139 EXTREME LEFTIST POLITICAL PRISONERS CONVICTED IN 1977 CASABLANCA TRIALS HAVE CONTINUED THEIR CAMPAIGN OF PETITIONS, OPEN LETTERS, AND CALLS ON POLITICAL, GOVERNMENT, AND PARTY FIGURES TO PURSUE THEIR DEMANDS FOR THEIR INCARCERATED FAMILY MEMBERS. MOST PROMINENT AMONG THESE DEMANDS IS THAT 139, DISPERSED TO OTHER PRISONS IN MOROCCO FOLLOWING PREVIOUS STRIKES, BE REUNITED.

2. SOCIALIST PARTY (USFP) MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY, A PARLIAMENTARY DEPUTY, EXPLAINED TO EMBOFF THAT THE PROTESTERS CONSTITUTED TWO SEPARATE CATEGORIES. THOSE STRIKING IN MEKNES WERE ABOUT 100 STILL UNTRIED PRISONERS WHO HAD BEEN ROUNDED UP IN MAY-JUNE 1977.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE 139, THE DEPUTY HAD AGAIN CALLED ON THE
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DIRECTOR OF MOROCCO'S PRISONS IN EARLY MAY IN RESPONSE TO A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE GROUP'S TITULAR LEADER, ABRAHAN SERFATY. THE OFFICIAL ARRANGED TO HAVE THE DEPUTY VISIT THOSE PRISONERS LOCATED IN KENITRA, WITH FULL FREEDOM TO DISCUSS THEIR PROBLEMS WITH THEM. THE DEPUTY REMARKED THAT IT WAS CLEAR TO HIM THAT THE MAIN AIM OF THESE DETAINEES WAS TO KEEP THEIR CASE BEFORE THE PUBLIC AND TO BE ABLE TO KNOW THAT OUTSIDE ELEMENTS REMAINED

CONCERNED WITH THEIR FLIGHT.

4. IN A SEPARATE MOVE, SOME PARENTS OF THE MEKNES DETAINEES SENT A LETTER TO ANOTHER USFP LEADER IN MID-MAY. THE LETTER CLAIMED THAT MANY OF THE MEKNES DETAINEES WERE IN SERIOUS PHYSICAL CONDITION AS A RESULT OF THEIR HUNGER STRIKE. THE USFP OFFICIAL CALLED ON MINISTER OF JUSTICE MAATI BOUABID, WHO AGREED TO FORM A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY CONSISTING OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FROM HIS MINISTRY, THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, AND THE CENTRAL PRISON ADMINISTRATION. THIS COMMITTEE HAD SUCCEEDED IN INDUCING THE STRIKERS TO END THEIR STRIKE, OUR USFP SOURCES SAID.

5. THE FIRST USFP SOURCE MENTIONED IN PARA 2 ABOVE SAID THERE WAS SOME INDICATION THAT THE MEKNES DETAINEES MIGHT BE TRIED LATER THIS SUMMER. ALL BUT 30 OR SO WOULD LIKELY BE RELEASED WITHOUT GOING TO TRIAL, HE FELT. THEY CONSISTED MOSTLY OF LYCEE STUDENTS WHOSE MAIN OFFENSE WAS TO INSULT THE KING DURING THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS LAST YEAR (SEE 77 RABAT 2937). IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS WERE TO THE LEFT OF THE ESTABLISHED POLITICAL PARTIES, AND NONE OF THESE NOR THE 139 WERE AFFILIATED WITH USFP. THE PARTY, IN DEFENDING THEM, WAS SIMPLY PURSUING ITS POLICY OF OPPOSITION TO ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS.

6. COMMENT: THE REPORTED NUMBER OF UNTRIED MEKNES DETAINEES IS HIGHER THAN WE HAD HEARD BEFORE. WE HAD ESTIMATED ONLY 30
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IN THIS CATEGORY.
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